

Book Review

Multimodal transport security: Frameworks and policy applications in freight and passenger transport

Joseph Syzliowicz, Luca Zampari, Genserik Reniers and Dawna Rhoades (editors)

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This edited collection is part of the series ‘Comparative Perspectives on Transportation Security’, also edited by Syzliowicz and Zampari. The previous book in this series (2014) focussed on maritime security. This edited collection attempts to address multimodal transportation and consists of 19 chapters, predominantly split into two sections: multimodal freight transportation security, and multimodal passenger transportation security. Each of these sections is then subdivided into two further subcomponents. For firstly freight, and secondly passenger security, the book repeats the same structure. A series of chapters are presented that examine themes and frameworks, and then a second set of chapters examine policy applications from the perspective of different international countries. This is a highly ambitious collection, and indeed as the editors asked themselves; ‘can we adequately cover multimodal transport for both passenger and freight transport in a single volume?’ (p292). That they managed to achieve this is a feat in itself, although as they acknowledge ‘this necessarily limited coverage’ although I would argue not to the book’s detriment.

The first chapter introduces the importance of multimodal transport in today’s society, and by default, the growing importance of multimodal transport security. The authors spend necessary but considerable time outlining the difference between multimodal and intermodal transportation. Interestingly, they argue that transportation security should be viewed from the intermodal rather than multimodal perspective; yet the book title and many chapters still reflect the use of multimodal transport networks. Their usage is interchangeable and not consistent throughout the book. However, as the authors who have contributed to this text come from a range of fields and backgrounds, this is perhaps not surprising. Given the diversity of author backgrounds it would have been also interesting to examine how the authors define and identify security. The notion of transportation security seems rather a given in the book. Careful reading reflects some subtle differences here across countries. Nevertheless, the editors have carefully and successfully collated examples from authors from 18 different countries into a single coherent volume.

Part I of this book, Chapters 2–5, identifies the security challenges faced by multimodal freight operations. It attempts to set out standardised frameworks within which to examine these, and highlights the difficulties of applying security across multiple international



jurisdictions. It suggests that thefts, acts of terrorism, and piracy are the most relevant to freight supply chains. Chapter 3 examines freight security from an economic perspective based on a range of security measures that have been implemented since 9/11. Chapter 4 attempts to provide a taxonomy of vulnerability and risk across the supply chain, and considers how to minimise risk whilst still optimising efficiencies. Chapter 5 concludes by reviewing the insurance issues associated with multimodal freight security.

Part 2 of the book, Chapters 6–11, brings together policy applications using case studies of 6 international countries and regions, the United States, Italy, the Baltic region, Kenya, China and Brazil. This global coverage is impressive in itself, and it incorporates examples from both developed and developing regions. A benefit of this comparative approach is that it examines national approaches to tackling multimodal freight security across very different parts of the globe. This reveals that despite the range of cultural, economic, political influences present within each country, many of the challenges that they face are similar. However, the unique nature of the freight supply chain means no single security measure can be applied globally. The range of measures used across different nations gives the reader an idea of the complexities faced by those implementing security at multimodal transportation.

Parts 3 and 4 then move to consider multimodal passenger security. Again as with freight, this starts (Part 3, Chapters 12 to 13) by identifying themes and frameworks, before exploring and reviewing policy applications using international case study countries (Part 4, Chapters 14 to 18). Chapter 12 outlines the unique challenges posed to security of multimodal passenger transportation. Again here, there is a discussion of the differences between multimodal and intermodal, and they suggest multimodality is more developed for freight than passenger transport. Chapter 13 then sets out some of the economic issues for multimodal passenger security that are explored in subsequent chapters.

Chapters 14–18 of the book consider policy examples again from different global perspectives, this time for multimodal passenger transportation. Examples of national policies are presented from the United States, the Netherlands, Israel, India and Brazil. Again after reading each chapter, the reader is able to compare developed and developing countries, with a range of political, cultural and economic differences. It is evident again that similar challenges are faced, but the local context within which these exist again demands that no one solution fits all. An interesting question raised is the issue of the acceptability of measures applied to different countries. For example, the solutions identified in Israel which has a long-standing history of security issues, and thus has evolved into what is described as multilevel approach (Chapter 16) may not readily translate to India. The example cited is that of ethnic profiling, which may be less acceptable in countries or even cities with very multi-ethnic populations. This also requires a regulated infrastructure and financial resource to implement that may not be available.

The concluding chapter of this book attempts to bring together and summarise the wealth of information contained in the edited collection. Again the editors call for the term intermodal rather than multimodal when considering transportation security. This highlights the need for origin to destination consideration, for logistics across the entire supply chain and for passengers the whole journey approach. When transportation crosses regional and international borders, the multiple jurisdiction approach required between governments is often lacking or slow to evolve to rapid changes in both transportation and subsequent security threats. Indeed much of the focus of the book is an economic and



national policy focus. As the authors conclude “Thus, while safety and security challenges are most pressing at the hubs and nodes where transport modes and cargos meet, it is clear that policy, oversight and regulations remain weak” (p295). The book could perhaps have benefited from further exploration into these hubs and nodes. What are the specific security threats posed, in terms of crime, safety and terrorism, and more importantly what security measures can be introduced at these pinch points on the network. How does this vary by different types of crimes, and or for a variety of modes of terrorist attack? Whilst the focus is on origin to destination, and economic challenges and specific policies, it is these nodes and hubs that are the most vulnerable. Yet perhaps they also offer more opportunity for security measures to be implemented. However, despite this minor grievance, the edited collection is still an impressive works. Combining both freight and passenger transportation into a single volume necessarily restricts coverage. A final question that cannot be addressed by this division is how is the security risk altered when passengers and freight are transported together in the same system?

This book will be of interest to those working in a range of disciplines including transportation, security, terrorism and crime, planning and logistics to name but a few. For those working on transportation security it is a highly recommended read.

Andrew Newton
Reader in Criminology, The Applied Criminology Centre,
The University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK
E-mail: a.d.newton@hud.ac.uk